

**TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 24, 1999**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Mayor Venis. Present were Mayor Venis, Vice-Mayor Bush and Councilmembers Cox, Paul and Weiner. Also present were Town Administrator Rawls, Town Attorney Webber, and Town Clerk Reinfeld recording the meeting.

1. DISCUSSION WITH THE MERCER GROUP ON TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH

Mr. Mercer reported that he had received additional information on the candidates and based on that information, he had divided the candidates into three groups.

Mr. Mercer began by reporting on Anthony Shoemaker who was the assistant city manager in Boca Raton. He advised that Mr. Shoemaker was no longer in Boca Raton and had been terminated. Mr. Mercer indicated that the city manager had resigned along with the city attorney and various other individuals. He explained that it was his understanding that there was a large development in Boca Raton that was putting pressure on the city government which was causing some major upheaval. Mr. Mercer went on to state that Mr. Shoemaker had been terminated from other positions although he had not been able to find any significant reasons for those terminations other than political changes. He suggested that there would be some controversy with his candidacy in Davie.

Mr. Wingo stated that Oel Wingo was currently the city manager in Ocala and from everything he had been able to learn, Mr. Wingo had a pretty good reputation in Ocala. However, he did mention that Mr. Wingo did not have a lot of operational experience and for that reason he had placed him in the "maybe" category. Mr. Mercer added that he had not been able to speak to Mr. Wingo directly and therefore, was not able to answer the question of whether he had been a candidate for the Ocala city administrator's position.

Mr. Mercer mentioned that he knew Michael West, assistant city manager in Columbia, South Carolina, but had placed him in the "maybe" category because he did not have the operational experience. He stated that Mr. West had some budget and management experience along with finance and administration. Mr. Mercer indicated that Mr. West also had some private sector experience but that he did not see a lot of operational experience in the recent past.

Mr. Mercer stated that Bonilyn Wilbanks-Free had been eliminated from the list at the previous meeting.

Mr. Mercer next discussed Carla Bernabei Talarico who was interim city manager and assistant city manager of the City of Miami Beach for several years and then an internal auditor for the City of Miami. He mentioned that for the past six years, she had been in the private sector and because she had been out of the public sector, he had moved her into the "maybe" category.

Dennis Tinberg from Page, Arizona, was the next candidate discussed. Mr. Mercer stated that he had moved him into the "not to be considered" category because of the size of the city he was coming from.

Mr. Mercer next discussed Scott Schrader, currently a city manager in Ohio. He mentioned that Mr. Schrader had been a planner in Coral Springs prior to being assistant city manager and then manager in Ohio. Mr. Mercer stated that everything he had found out about Mr. Schrader was very positive and for that reason, felt that he was a good candidate to be considered.

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Mayor Venis questioned Mr. Mercer about the number of candidates that should be on their list to call for interviews. Mr. Mercer indicated that five to seven would be the best number.

Mr. Mercer stated that there had been some questions about James Shapard at the prior meeting. He indicated that Mr. Shapard was the number two person in Joliet which has a population of about 90,000 and a Council/Manager form of government. Mr. Mercer stated that he felt that Mr. Shapard was a good solid candidate.

Mr. Mercer next mentioned Robert Powers who was the assistant city manager in the City of Wichita Falls which had a population of about 100,000. He stated that Mr. Powers had only been in Wichita Falls for two years which might be a reason for concern but that he had an extremely good reputation, was well educated, and was working in a fine government. Mr. Mercer indicated that he had placed Mr. Powers in the "yes" category for those reasons. Councilmember Paul mentioned that she felt his resume was rather weak. Mayor Venis stated that he had not placed him on his final list. After some discussion, Mr. Mercer agreed that perhaps Mr. Powers would be on the edge of the kind of experience Council was looking for and perhaps not quite as seasoned as some of the other candidates. Councilmember Cox suggested not disregarding Mr. Powers all together.

Mr. Mercer discussed Charles Nickerson who was currently a consultant and he had found good things about him. He indicated that Mr. Nickerson had tried working in the private sector which had not worked out as well as he had wanted and he was now wanting to go back into the government setting. Mr. Mercer added that Mr. Nickerson had been in some large communities and some rapidly growing communities and that he had placed him in the "yes" category.

Mr. Mercer stated that Eric Meserve was currently the city manager in a city in North Florida whose population was 4,497. He said that as much as Mr. Meserve was a good city manager, he felt that it would be a large leap for him to try to come to a city the size of Davie. Mr. Mercer stated that he had put him in the "no" category.

Mr. Mercer stated that Susan Miller was currently the assistant county administrator in Escambia County. He indicated that Council had requested more information on her background in finance and budgeting and that he had not been able to find much in her background with regard to that. Because of that, Mr. Mercer indicated that he had moved her into the "maybe" category. Councilmember Cox stated that she had put Ms. Miller on her "no" list with Council agreeing.

Mr. Mercer indicated that Michael Miller had pretty much been ruled out at the previous meeting because of the short duration of experience.

Mr. Mercer indicated that Robert Middaugh, the city manager in a city near Denver, Colorado, had a very good reputation and had been in his position since 1992. He stated that previous to that, Mr. Middaugh had been in various other positions in several other states. Mr. Mercer explained that one of Mr. Middaugh's reasons for wanting to move was that he and his family wanted to get closer to the water. He added that he had placed Mr. Middaugh in the "yes" category. Mr. Mercer felt that Mr. Middaugh was coming from a smaller population jurisdiction and there would be some adjustment for Mr. Middaugh but that he had worked in a large metropolitan area. Mayor Venis and Councilmember Cox agreed and stated that they had placed him in their "yes" categories.

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Mr. Mercer next discussed Michael McCurdy who was most recently a city manager in a city in Kansas. He reported that he had interviewed Mr. McCurdy fairly recently and was favorably disposed towards him. Mr. Mercer mentioned, however, that he was a little concerned that Mr. McCurdy had been out of a job for a while, which was not usually a real good sign. He added that Mr. McCurdy might be being very choosy about what he wanted to look at and what he wanted to do. Mayor Venis stated that he had not put him in his "yes" category. Councilmembers Cox and Paul had put him in their "maybe" category. Vice-Mayor Bush stated he had him in a "yes/maybe" category. It was agreed to put him in the "maybe" category.

Mr. Mercer stated that Katherine Mitchell had been the assistant city manager of Boca Raton and left there long enough ago that she had escaped the latest controversy. He indicated that she had gone back to school to get a Master's Degree and added that everything he had found out about her was very positive. Mr. Mercer said that he had put her in the "yes" category.

Mr. Mercer said that Rodney Irwin was currently the director of Parks and Planning for the Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning Commission in Silver Springs, Maryland. He stated that he had known Mr. Irwin previously when he had been in New Jersey. Mr. Mercer added that Mr. Irwin was a very good city manager and that he had gotten off his career path recently with the planning position and wanted to get back into city management. He stated that Mr. Irwin was in his "yes" category.

Mr. Mercer stated that Council had asked him to check out a few things about Robert Hendrix, one being his salary with San Luis Obispo County which was \$110,000. He expressed concern that Mr. Hendrix had been out for a while and added that he had put him in the "maybe" category. Councilmember Cox asked whether Mr. Mercer had had an opportunity to talk with Mr. Hendrix about the salary issue. Mr. Mercer responded affirmatively and that Mr. Hendrix did not see that as a problem. Councilmember Paul asked if Mr. Mercer had checked into the public utilities commission that Mr. Hendrix had conducted extensive research into. Councilmember Cox stated that she felt that if this matter would be something to ask Mr. Hendrix if Council interviewed him. Mr. Mercer stated that he was very high on Mr. Hendrix but concerned that if he agreed to take less money, would he be unhappy doing that.

Mr. Mercer stated that William Dennis who had been the county manager in Frederick County, Maryland had been terminated and that apparently, new board members had been elected and they had requested him to dismiss several people, which he had not felt he could do. Mr. Dennis was given the choice of dismissing them or being terminated. Mr. Mercer indicated that what he knew about Mr. Dennis was very positive although there would be some controversy about his current situation. He stated that he had placed him in the "yes" category. Mayor Venis said that he had also placed Mr. Dennis in his "yes" category also.

Mr. Mercer stated that the next candidate was Henry Dolive, a township administrator in the Cincinnati metropolitan area. He indicated that Mr. Dolive was a very competent, bright person with a non-traditional background. Mr. Mercer added that everything he knew about Mr. Dolive was very positive and had placed him in his "yes" category. Mayor Venis stated that he had him in his "yes" category. Councilmember Cox said that she had also placed him in her "yes" category.

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Mr. Mercer stated that Larry Arnold lived in the Tampa Bay area and was the chief assistant city manager of St. Petersburg for several years. He added that Mr. Arnold was very competent although he had been out of the city management profession for about eight and a half years. Mr. Mercer stated that Mr. Arnold had the credentials that Council was looking for but had been away from it for a while. Mayor Venis along with Councilmember Paul said they had him in the "no" category. Councilmember Cox and Vice-Mayor Bush agreed.

Mr. Mercer stated that Council had discussed Richard French extensively at the previous meeting and had disposed of him.

Mr. Mercer stated that there were two other candidates that Council had asked him to check into, Greg Purcell and Jerry Trojan. He indicated that Mr. Purcell appeared to have a very good background and that the only question about him was that much of his current responsibility was what he referred to as "staff responsibility" with not too much line management responsibility. Mayor Venis said he had him in his "no" category. Councilmember Paul said she had him in her "maybe" category.

Mr. Mercer mentioned that Mr. Trojan was an assistant city manager in a city in New Mexico. He stated that he had done some additional checking on Mr. Trojan and had not found anything wrong with him. Mr. Mercer said that he had some questions about the geographic differences between New Mexico and Florida and whether those adjustments could be made especially coming from a number two job. He indicated that he had placed him in the "maybe" category. Mayor Venis said that he had him in the "no" category. Councilmember Cox stated that she had him in the "maybe" category.

Mr. Mercer listed the names in the "yes" category: Mr. Schrader, Mr. Shapard, Mr. Nickerson, Mr. Middaugh, Ms. Mitchell, Mr. Irwin, Mr. Dennis, and Mr. Dolive. Mayor Venis and Councilmember Cox stated that they had Mr. West in their "yes" category. Councilmember Cox and Vice-Mayor Bush indicated that Mr. Powers was a real strong "maybe". Mayor Venis indicated that he thought there were so many other stronger candidates. Mr. Mercer indicated that because of Mr. Powers' experience, he would be at the lower end of the category. He suggested that he would like to have eight candidates that he could narrow down to five after background and reference checks. There was some discussion as to how they candidates were going to be ranked.

Mayor Venis suggested that Councilmembers chose their top eight candidates, without ranking them.

While Council was making their list, Mr. Mercer discussed the date for the interviews. He stated that April 16th had been chosen which would give him a couple of weeks to get his information together. Mr. Mercer added that in the reports, there would be suggested questions, evaluation forms, a write-up on each candidate, a resume of each candidate, suggested steps for the interview, key selection criteria, and other various information. He suggested that if they were interviewing five candidates, that each candidate be interviewed for an hour and fifteen minutes with Council sitting as a formal body with the idea that once Council got serious about someone, there would be plenty of time for them to come back and spend a day or two with Council. Mr. Mercer suggested that the meeting begin about 8:30 in the morning, adding that he needed about thirty minutes with Council prior to the interviews. Councilmember Cox suggested that they allow time for discussion amongst Councilmembers following each interview so that they could share their individual views. Mr. Mercer suggested they do two interviews in the morning and

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three in the afternoon. He also discussed the idea that it was fairly typical to pay the travel expenses of the candidates to come for the interview. Council agreed that this expense would be reasonable.

After Council ranked sheets the candidates, the five to be interviewed were: Mr. Nickerson, Mr. Middaugh, Mr. Irwin, Mr. Dennis and Mr. Shapard. Mr. Mercer stated that the three alternate candidates were Mr. Schrader who ranked the highest of the three, then Ms. Mitchell and then Mr. Dolive. (*See note below.)

There being no objection or further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

APPROVED _____

Mayor/Councilmember

Town Clerk

*After the Council meeting adjourned, staff reviewed the ranking sheets. As one Councilmember did not select a third candidate, this resulted in an inaccurate ranking for Mr. Schrader. After bringing this matter to the Councilmember's attention, the Councilmember added a third selection correcting this discrepancy. The supplemental ranking is as follows: Ms. Mitchell, Mr. Schrader, and Mr. Dolive.